



Brussels, 9 December 2014

COST 134/14

DECISION

Subject: B.2. "COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment"

The "COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment", integrates the CSO decisions on monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions (COST 131/14). These rules replace the document COST 4114/13 and will be completed by accompanying guidelines. These rules enter into force as from 1 January 2015.

The Committee of Senior Officials approved this document through written procedure on 9 December 2014.



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COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment

The COST Committee of Senior Officials (“CSO”) having regard to
COST 132/14, “Rules for the Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”,
in accordance with its role as General Assembly of the COST Association,

Whereas:

- (1) COST Member Countries have established an International not-for-profit Association, the COST Association, integrating the governance, management and implementation functions of COST.
- (2) COST contributes to the objective of strengthening the scientific and technological bases of the European Research Area by promoting the networking of researchers, engineers or scholars encouraging them to share, create and apply knowledge, thereby encouraging Europe to become more competitive.
- (3) COST is open to all fields in Science and Technology and wishes to foster multi- and interdisciplinary, aiming to enable breakthrough scientific developments leading to new concepts and products.
- (4) COST is supported by the European Union (EU) Framework Programme promoting research and innovation activities and fostering better exploitation of the industrial potential of policies of innovation, research and technological development in the European Research Area.
- (5) COST is implemented in accordance and compliance, where applicable, with the EU Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council) and its Rules of Application (Commission Regulation (EU, Euratom) No1268/2012).
- (6) The set of “COST Implementation Rules” should provide a coherent, comprehensive and transparent frame to ensure efficient and harmonised implementation of activities, as well as ease access for all potential stakeholders, by promoting and facilitating participation from a wide range of researchers, engineers or scholars from universities, research centres, companies, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as other relevant legal entities.
- (7) For the benefit of the COST participants the COST Implementation Rules should be robust, stable and consistent and should focus on best interest of research communities and foster mutual trust in their networking activities.
- (8) COST should provide funding for activities of relevance for fulfilling COST mission and achieving COST objectives, more particularly for COST Actions, the COST networking instrument.
- (9) COST should further encourage participation of young talents and next generation leaders in science and technology, promote working opportunities for Early Career Investigators and gender balance.

- (10) COST should reinforce its Inclusiveness Policy with the aim to identify and strengthen scientific excellence, to support integration of scientific research communities and increase the participation of researchers, engineers or scholars from identified Inclusiveness Target Countries in COST activities.
- (11) COST funds networking activities in the field of science and technology destined only for peaceful purposes; any funding of activities related to sensitive technology development, armament or defence oriented research should be avoided. COST should support activities carried out in compliance with fundamental ethical principles.
- (12) COST should foresee appropriate scientific and technological monitoring and follow-up in view of assessing the results, outcomes and impacts of COST Actions and other activities.
- (13) COST should establish the frame for a proper impact analysis and comprehensive statistics of participation in COST Actions and other activities as well as results and outcomes.
- (14) COST should encourage the use, dissemination and exploitation of research results while, where appropriate, giving particular attention to confidential data and protection of intellectual property generated through COST activities, in particular through COST Actions. COST activities should not contribute to distortions in access to markets or development of monopolies.
- (15) COST should promote Open Access and encourage availability of results published thanks to COST funding and thereby contributing to boost worldwide visibility of European science and technology.
- (16) COST should protect EU financial interests and ensure sound financial management. COST is aware that the EU auditing procedures apply.

Has adopted the present rules for “COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment” on 9 December 2014 in accordance with the “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST activities¹”. This Decision will enter into force on 01 January 2015.

Subject Matter and Scope

COST strives to implement transparent, efficient and simple management, monitoring and assessment procedures.

This decision lays down the rules for the management, monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions and strives to achieve the best quality performance. These rules derive from the basic principles laid down in the Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities.

These rules are further detailed and explained in the COST Vademecum and in the related Guidelines.

¹ COST 132/14 “Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities”

Definitions

For the purpose of this Decision, the following definitions shall apply:

1. COST Member Country: means any country that joined the COST Association as a Full Member following the approval of the COST Association Statutes.
2. COST Cooperating State: means any State that was admitted to the COST Association as Cooperating Member.
3. COST Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC): means COST Member Countries that fulfil the Horizon 2020 widening eligibility conditions being either an EU Member State or an Associated Country to the EU Framework Programme.
4. COST Near Neighbour Countries: means countries approved by the Committee of Senior Officials to benefit from dedicated support for the integration of their scientists in COST activities.
5. International Partner Countries (IPC): means all those countries that are neither COST Member Countries, nor Cooperating State nor COST Near Neighbour Countries.
6. EU Agencies: means any organisation governed by European public law, with its own legal personality, established in the EU to accomplish specific tasks of a legal, technical and/or scientific nature in a given policy field and to support the EU Member States but distinct from the EU institutions.
7. European RTD Organisation: means any intergovernmental scientific research organisation that is responsible for infrastructures and laboratories whose members are countries, and the majority of which are COST Member Countries or Cooperating State.
8. International Organisation: means any organisation with an European or international membership, scope or presence, with its own legal personality, governed by international public law or recognised as of general interest, in particular promoting scientific and technological cooperation, which should have an added value in the fulfilment of COST Mission.
9. COST National Coordinator (CNC): means the individuals appointed by the COST Member Countries and Cooperating State in charge of confirming the acceptance of the Action Memorandum of Understanding and nominate the Management Committee members of their country and the evaluators for the Review Panels pool of Experts.
10. Scientific Committee (SC): means the committee composed of independent, internationally renowned, high-level experts, one per COST Member Country and Cooperating State, appointed by the CSO.
11. Open Call for proposals: means the official announcement/publication with the description of the objectives and criteria required for COST Action proposals to be evaluated and selected. The Open Call allows submitting proposals on a continuous basis; the publication indicates the Collection Dates.
12. Collection Date: means the date when the proposals for new COST Actions submitted during a certain period are gathered and sent for evaluation.

13. Main Proposer: means the coordinator of the network of proposers who submit a proposal for a COST Action in response to the Open Call.
14. COST Action: means the COST pan-European networking instrument allowing researchers, engineers or scholars from COST Member Countries and Cooperating State to develop jointly their ideas and new initiatives in a field or topic of common interest.
15. Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): means the agreement accepted by a minimum of five different COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State describing the Action objectives. This document has to be accepted by any additional COST Member Country or Cooperating State joining the Action.
16. COST Action Grant Agreement (AGA): means the agreement between the COST Association and the Grant Holder that governs the administrative and financial implementation of the COST Action.
17. Grant Holder: means the legal entity responsible for the administrative and financial implementation of the COST Action.
18. Action Participant: means any researcher, engineer or scholar who participates actively in a COST Action.
19. Early Career Investigator (ECI): means a researcher in the time span of up to 8 years after the date of obtaining the PhD/doctorate (full-time equivalent).
20. Management Committee (MC): means the group of researchers, engineers or scholars representing the COST Member Countries and Cooperating State that have accepted the MoU. They are in charge of the coordination, implementation, and management of an Action's activities as well as supervising the appropriate allocation and use of the COST funding with a view to achieving the Action's scientific and technological objectives. They are nominated by the CNC.
21. Working Group (WG) Member: means any researcher appointed by the Management Committee to contribute to the achievement of Action objectives.
22. MC Observer: means a researcher observing a COST Action's coordination and decision-making process and activities on behalf of his/her institution of affiliation.
23. Dissemination: means the public disclosure of COST Action's results and/or outcomes by any appropriate means (other than resulting from protecting or exploiting the results), including by scientific publications in any media.

General provisions

The objective of the rules and procedure described herein is to enhance the management quality and implement transparent monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions. They shall aim at addressing the COST mission and policies. Particular attention shall be paid to enhancing the support of Early Career Investigators and promoting gender balance.

New Action proposals are submitted for evaluation and selection following the COST Open Call. The selection of proposals for new COST Actions is outlined in the rules for "COST Action Proposal

Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval” and accompanying guidelines. The selection procedure is followed by the CSO approval of the list of proposals selected by the Scientific Committee (SC) for new COST Actions.

After approval by the CSO, the Memorandum of Understanding is prepared for each new COST Action and is opened for participation as described in the present document.

1. Basic principles

The COST Actions are overall governed by legal, ethical, contractual, financial and administrative principles, rules and procedures, as well as by the nature and source of COST funding in the form of EU public funds.

More specifically, the implementation of COST Actions must be oriented towards the fulfilment of the objectives described in the Action’s Memorandum of Understanding and the basic principles described therein, comply with the Action’s Grant Agreement and be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the present rules (hereinafter referred to as the "Rules for Action Management").

2. Memorandum of Understanding

2.1. Structure of the Memorandum of Understanding

For launching a new COST Action a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) must be prepared. The MoU consists of two parts: the MoU and the Technical Annex.

The MoU comprises:

- The reference number and title of the Action;
- The main objective of the Action;
- The economic dimension of the activities carried out under the Action;
- The required minimum number of COST Member Countries and/or Cooperating State participating in the Action;
- The period of time for which the Action remains in force, calculated from the date of the first meeting of the Management Committee.

The Technical Annex contains a description of the networking project, namely the COST Action Structure and Strategy.

2.2. Acceptance of the Memorandum of Understanding and Start of Action

Participation in a COST Action is subject to the acceptance of the MoU by a minimum of five (5) COST countries.

Within a period of twelve (12) months after the approval of the Action, any COST Member Country or Cooperating State can join the Action. After this period, additional COST Member Countries or the Cooperating State may join the Action subject to the agreement of the Action Management Committee (MC).

The Action will start on the date of the first MC meeting which can be organised only after at least five (5) COST countries have accepted the MoU. COST Actions have normally four (4) years

duration. At the first MC meeting the Action Chair is elected and the Grant Holder is selected, which is mandatory to proceed with the signature of the Action Grant Agreement (AGA).

The AGA is the contract signed between the Grant Holder and the COST Association setting the legal and financial conditions applying to the COST Action. It defines the duration of the COST Action counting from the date of the first MC meeting (Start of the COST Action) and contains the Work and Budget Plan.

Actions that fail to start within six (6) months from the date of approval of the MoU by the CSO due to lack of the minimum number of participating countries, or because the first meeting of the MC has not been held within six months of the date of approval, will be referred back to the CSO for decision.

3. Changes to a COST Action

Possible changes to the MoU:

- Any proposed change to a COST Action main aim and objectives must be based on Scientific & Technological (S&T) justification and will be brought to the attention of the CSO for decision;
- A COST Member Country or Cooperating State participating in the Action which intends, for any reason, to terminate its participation, will notify the COST Association of its intention immediately;
- If the number of COST countries participating in the COST Action falls below the minimum number of five, the Action will be terminated;
- The duration of a COST Action is defined in the MoU and is of normally four (4) years calculated from the date of the first MC meeting. The period may be shortened or exceptionally extended by the CSO, if well justified, in the following cases:
 - The COST Action may be terminated before its originally intended end date if any circumstances make the benefit of continuing the COST Action questionable;
 - Termination of COST Actions are exceptional and must be duly justified from an S&T or network activities point of view;
 - The COST Action may be exceptionally extended for a maximum of six months beyond its originally intended end date. Such extension is only possible if during the course of the Action the MC notes that it is, for technical reasons, impossible to bring the work under the Action within the normal duration to a satisfactory conclusion, or if the monitoring process of the COST Action reveals that the extension would contribute to the achievement of the proposed objectives and is likely to maximise the impact of the COST Action;
 - Extensions of COST Actions are exceptional and must be duly justified from an S&T or network activities point of view. The extension has to be requested at the latest within the second Progress Review. The final assessment of COST Actions having benefited from an extension shall include a dedicated section assessing the extension period.

The Technical Annex can be revised by the Action MC to follow the needs of implementation or any relevant scientific/technological development occurring during the lifetime of the Action. Such changes must obtain prior agreement from the COST Association.

4. COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment

COST Actions are open to researchers, engineers or scholars relevant to the Action who are committed to achieving the objectives laid out in the Action MoU.

The Action activities are planned by the Action MC in compliance with the objectives, strategy, structure, and work plan presented in the Action's MoU. They are reflected in the Work and Budget Plan (WB&P) annexed to the AGA.

COST Action grants must be devoted to the MoU implementation and respect the AGA conditions. The COST networking tools shall help in achieving the Action objectives; all research and other activities needed to achieve those objectives are deemed to be funded by national funds.

The management of a COST Action comprises the various aspects necessary for the organisation, implementation and completion of its activities towards achievement of its objectives. They are summarized as follows:

- Action Participation: this includes the rules, procedures and responsibilities linked to the involvement, role and tasks of participants in COST Actions;
- Action Objectives: The Action objectives as detailed in the MoU;
- Action Strategy and Structure: this comprises the organisation of the Action in:
 - The Action Scientific & Technological (S&T), research and development activities necessary to achieve the objectives;
 - The internal organisation of the Action in to Working Groups and other managing structures needed for the successful implementation of the Action;
 - The work plan including efficient use of the networking tools – meetings (MC meetings, Working Group meetings, workshops, conferences), Short Term Scientific Missions, Training Schools and Dissemination activities to share ideas and knowledge and create added value;
 - The timeline for the implementation of the Action activities and the achievement of objectives within the Action lifetime.
- Action Budget and Administration: this comprises the administrative and financial coordination and management linked to the Action;
- Action Monitoring and Final Assessment: this comprises the follow-up and assessment of the level of achievement of an Action's objectives whether on-going or concluded.

4.1 COST Action Participation

Action Participants engage to contribute to the achievement of the objectives set in the Action MoU and conditions described in the AGA and have thereby accepted to respect the set of COST Implementation Rules and the COST Vademecum.

All participants need to have a registered profile in the COST electronic database, e-COST.

4.2 COST Action Objectives

The COST Action objectives must be clearly stated in the MoU. COST Actions shall aim at their achievement. They shall thereby contribute to the fulfillment of COST Mission and goals.

4.3 COST Action Strategy and Structure

The coordination, implementation and management of an Action, as well as the supervision of the appropriate allocation and use of the grant, are entrusted to the COST Action MC.

Action MC Members represent the COST Member Countries or the Cooperating State for which they were nominated by the COST National Coordinator, regardless of their nationality. The MC is composed of up to two representatives from each Member Country or Cooperating State participating in the Action.

The MC may include up to two representatives from Near Neighbour Countries or International Partner Countries as MC Observers; these representatives must come from different institutions. Specific Organisations can appoint representatives to participate in the Action. MC Observers have no voting rights².

The COST Action MC has the responsibility to:

- Define and manage the Action Strategy and Structure, including election of the Action Chair, Vice-Chair and Grant Holder, Working Group composition or membership, leadership and structure, and other activities necessary to achieve the Action Objectives;
- Establish specific provisions linked to the management, share, creation, dissemination or exploitation of knowledge, including Open Access policy and management of Intellectual Property that may rise from an Action. These provisions must comply with national, European or international legislation and the need for protecting the participants' legitimate interests;
- Perform the reporting duties allowing for the monitoring and assessment of the Action and financial reporting (see below);
- Decide, among potentially eligible participants, the ones entitled to reimbursement.

The 'Rules of Procedure for Management Committee' are displayed in Annex I. They contain the provisions for internal decision-making process and management of activities of the Action MC.

4.4 COST Action Budget and Administration

COST Actions are administered through the COST Decentralised management scheme, the COST Grant System (CGS). Only the first MC meeting is funded by the COST Centralised management scheme.

Under the COST Grant System the Action financial management and administration is entrusted to and implemented by the Grant Holder, in compliance with MC decisions.

The Grant Holder is the legal entity signing the AGA on behalf of the Action and ensuring the legal and financial administration of the COST Action as defined in the MoU and the AGA. As such, it fulfils the conditions described in the AGA and must respect the set of COST Implementation Rules

² See COST 135/14 "COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation"

and the COST Vademecum, where further information on the nature of an AGA and the role and responsibilities of the Grant Holder can be found³.

The first MC meeting of a COST Action is organised by the COST Centralised management.

4.5 COST Action Monitoring and Final Assessment

All COST Actions shall be monitored during their implementation and be assessed at their completion. Such exercise, performed via a documented analysis of the results and outcomes of COST Action S&T and networking activities, will aim at contributing to the best dissemination and exploitation of COST Action results and outcomes and to maximise the potential impact of COST Actions.

Each COST Action shall benefit from an independent external monitoring and final assessment, carried by an Action Rapporteur. Action Rapporteurs are independent external experts with pertinent expertise in the Action's fields of science and technology. Each COST Action will have one Action Rapporteur. In exceptional cases, where additional expertise might be needed, a second Rapporteur can be appointed.

Action Rapporteurs will be appointed by the COST Association from the COST Expert database; they will be identified based on the fields and sub-fields of science and technology following the OECD classification which are of pertinence for each COST Action.

Action Rapporteurs shall advise the Action MC on the strategic orientation of activities and structure to best serve the Action objectives, they will perform the reporting duties for the monitoring and assessment of an Action, without prejudice of the management and monitoring responsibilities of the COST Association, to whom they will report on the activities and advancements of the Action.

4.5.1 Obligation of confidentiality

All individuals involved in the monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions must commit to confidentiality. The experts involved in the monitoring and final assessment procedures shall:

- Treat confidentially any information and documents, in any form (i.e. paper or electronic), disclosed in writing or orally in relation to the performance of the monitoring and final assessment;
- Not disclose, directly or indirectly, confidential information or documents relating to Actions, without prior written approval of the COST Association;
- Not disclose any detail of the monitoring and final assessment procedures and their outcomes for any purpose other than fulfilling their tasks as Action Rapporteur.

4.5.2. COST Action Monitoring

The monitoring of COST Actions is the regular follow-up and review of running COST Actions.

The main objective of the external monitoring is to provide a regular assessment on the progress of the COST Action with relation to the implementation of networking activities, the development of S&T activities towards the MoU objectives and the putting into practice of COST Policies.

The COST Action monitoring exercise aims at giving advise to the MC where necessary, identifying and suggesting eventual corrective measures and/or best practices.

³ See COST Vademecum

The MC will produce progress reports at months 18 and 36 of its implementation that will constitute the basis for the external monitoring of the COST Action. Such progress reports shall contain information on all Action activities carried out in the pursuit of the Action objectives.

The Action Rapporteur will prepare twice during the lifetime of the COST Action, at months 18 and 36, a Progress Review Report with recommendations to the MC concerning Action implementation in view of ensuring the achievement of the objectives stated in the MoU. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Action MC must take into consideration the findings, advice and recommendations of the Rapporteurs.

4.5.3. COST Action Final Assessment

The final assessment of COST Actions is the process of analysing how the networking activities have contributed to the success of the Action as a whole and the Action Participants as individuals, how well the COST Action has reached its stated objectives and might have eventually created an impact after completion, including any follow-up initiatives or R&D activities in the area covered by the COST Action.

The main objective of the final assessment is to identify: i) how well the Action has reached its defined objectives and goals, ii) expected immediate, mid-term and envisaged long-term impacts of the Action after its completion, including the initiation of any follow-up activities and its impact on R&D activities in the area covered by the Action.

The COST Action final assessment exercise aims at assessing the Action achievements against the objectives and potential impact.

The final assessment is carried out at the end of each COST Action, normally at month 48. The Action Rapporteur shall prepare a Final Assessment Report highlighting of the Action achievements and impact, potential identification of success story(ies) and indicate emerging issues or potentially important future developments. The information shall be provided to the Scientific Committee in order to allow the development of their role on Impact assessment of the ended COST Actions.

Role of the COST Scientific Committee in the Action Monitoring and Final Assessment

It is under the Scientific Committee remit to play a strategic role in the Monitoring and Final Assessment of COST Actions.

The Scientific Committee examines and validates a summary of Progress Reports and Final Assessment Reports covering the monitored or ended COST Actions within the period between two Scientific Committee Plenary meetings. The Scientific Committee is also responsible for the analysis of the outcomes and impact of the ended Actions.

To allow the Scientific Committee to carry out the monitoring of the running COST Actions, it shall receive twice a year the reports of the running COST Actions as well as of the Action Rapporteurs. A series of statistics (participation of COST Member Countries, in particular ITC, and Cooperating State, Near Neighbour Countries, International Partner Countries, industries/SMEs, Early Career and young investigators, age, gender, etc.) shall also be put to its disposal. The Scientific Committee shall analyse these different elements and provide advice and recommendations to the COST Actions as appropriate in particular in terms of their follow-up of COST Policies and their contribution to the fulfilment of the COST Mission.

This Monitoring and Final Assessment of COST Actions shall allow the Scientific Committee to foster the strategic orientation of COST activities and give advice and recommendation on S&T strategies to the CSO.

5. Conflict of Interest

COST expects ethical behaviour from all participants in COST Activities in accordance with the principles established in the “COST Code of Conduct”. COST strives to avoid any Conflict of Interest in its activities.

The present rules define and describe the handling of Conflict of Interest situation in the monitoring and final assessment of COST Action, in accordance with the principles established in the “COST Code of Conduct”. They apply to any person involved in the procedure, i.e. Action Participant, Scientific Committee Member, Review Panel Member and independent External Experts identified and invited to act as COST Action Rapporteurs.

5.1 Conflict of Interest definition and cases

A Conflict of Interest with regard to the monitoring and final assessment of COST Actions is the risk that professional judgement or actions regarding a person’s duties and responsibilities will be unduly influenced by that person’s professional or private interests.

A Conflict of Interest can be real, potential or perceived.

5.1.1 Real Conflict of Interest cases

The Action Rapporteur involved in the monitoring and final assessment procedures:

- Was involved in the preparation of the proposal for the Action;
- Has participated in any of the Action’s activities.

5.1.2 Potential Conflict of Interest cases

The Action Rapporteur involved in the monitoring and final assessment procedures:

- Was aware of the preparation of the proposal for the Action;
- Has a professional or personal relationship with any of the Action participants;
- Stands to benefit directly or indirectly from the Action;
- Was involved in the evaluation or selection of proposals submitted under the same Collection Date as the proposal that led to the Action.

5.1.3 Perceived Conflict of Interest case

The Action Rapporteur involved in the monitoring and final assessment procedures:

- Feels for any reason unable to provide an impartial review (progress monitoring and final assessment) of the Action.

5.2 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Action Rapporteurs as well as Scientific Committee Members must sign a declaration stating/accepting he/she:

- is not aware any conflict of interest with the Action or Actions to be monitored and assessed when ended;
- will inform immediately the COST Association of any conflict of interest discovered during the monitoring and final assessment procedure;
- will maintain the confidentiality of the procedure.

Table 1: Incompatibilities

This tables presents cases where a position is incompatible with monitoring and final assessment procedures.

Procedure	Action MC Chair, Vice- Chair, Member	Review Panel Member	Scientific Committee Member
Monitoring	x	x	x
Final assessment	x	x	x

X = incompatible

As a principle, CNCs as well as CSO members cannot be involved in Action Monitoring and Final Assessment.

Consequences

The first duty of any person involved in the monitoring and final assessment procedures is to declare a Conflict of Interest.

Failure to declare the Conflict of Interest shall have the following consequences:

- Notification to the Director of the COST Association;
- Removal of the Action Rapporteur from the COST Expert Database.

All cases of Conflict of Interest shall be recorded in writing.

1. If the Conflict of Interest is identified/confirmed during the monitoring and/or final assessment:
 - The Action Rapporteur must stop the monitoring and/or final assessment of the Action and shall be replaced if in the opinion of the COST Association the Conflict of Interest identified/ confirmed would preclude the Action Rapporteur from making an impartial monitoring or final assessment of the Action;
 - Any comments and marks already given by the Action Rapporteur shall be discarded.
2. If the Conflict of Interest is identified/confirmed after the monitoring and final assessment has taken place, the COST Association shall examine:



- The potential impact and consequences of the Conflict of Interest and take appropriate measures.

The COST Association has the right to take the lead in any resolution process of a Conflict of Interest situation at any moment of monitoring and final assessment.

Final Provisions

The present Rules shall be binding in their entirety and directly applicable to all COST Actions.

Any change or derogations to the current Rules are subject to the approval of the CSO.



Rules of Procedure for COST Action Management Committees

Article 1

The Management Committee (MC) for COST Action has been set up in accordance with the provisions of the “COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment”.

The members of the MC are nominated by the COST National Coordinator of the respective COST Member Country or Cooperating State participating in the Action. The MC consists of up to two representatives for each COST Member Country and Cooperating State. MC members are considered as representatives of their country.

Researchers, engineers or scholars from Near Neighbour Countries and International Partner Countries can be MC Observers; participation is limited to up to two representatives provided they come from two different institutions of the country in question. Also Specific Organisations can be represented in the MC as MC Observers, with no voting right. MC Observers must be approved by the MC and the COST Association. Their participation must follow the “COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation Rules”.

Article 2

The main responsibilities of the MC are, as defined in Section 4.3. - *Action Strategy and Structure* of the “COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment”, to ensure the coordination, implementation and management of the Action as well as supervising the appropriate allocation and use of the funds. Minutes must be taken at each MC meeting and uploaded into e-COST.

Article 3

Each COST Member Country and Cooperating State participating in the Action has one vote in the MC. If a MC Member is unable to attend a meeting, the vote may be delegated to an officially appointed substitute (see Article 4). MC Observers from Near Neighbour Countries, International Partner Countries, or Specific Organisations have the right to express their views but not to vote.

Votes can be held electronically via e-mail and are valid if all of the following conditions are met:

- 3.1 Voting is initiated and managed by the MC Chair;
- 3.2 All MC Members are among the recipients of the message initiating the vote (and MC Observers receive the message but have no voting right);
- 3.3 The vote is open for seven days;
- 3.4 The COST Association is informed of the outcome of the vote;
- 3.5 The outcome of the vote is included in the minutes of the next MC Meeting after the electronic vote is held.

In case of electronic vote, absence of reply is interpreted as consent. Electronic vote (via e-mail) cannot be used for the approval of International Partner Country participants and for the approval of the annual Work and Budget Plan, for which specific procedures and dedicated online tools are available.

Article 4

The MC members of a country may, with the agreement of both the relevant COST National Coordinator and the MC Chair, appoint a substitute in case of his/her absence. Attendance at the MC meeting should be limited to members (or their substitute), as well as the designated MC Observers.

Article 5

The MC may decide that some of its discussions or certain minutes of meetings and other documents be considered confidential; those documents shall be sent to the COST Association. Documents are not considered confidential unless this is clearly stated on the front page.

The information supplied by the members of the MC shall not be published without their agreement.

Article 6

If in the course of this Action results are obtained or expected, which could give rise to intellectual property rights, the MC shall take the necessary steps, be it by written agreement among the participants or otherwise, in order to protect these rights, with respect to the principles set out in "Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities" and corresponding guidelines.

Article 7

The MC appoints by a simple majority vote from among its members a Chair and a Vice-Chair for the duration of the Action⁴. The election shall take place during the first MC meeting.

If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, his/her place shall be taken by the Vice-Chair. Whenever the Chair is affiliated to the Grant Holder or acts as a local organiser, commitments, validation and approval are transferred to the Vice-Chair.

In the event of the premature resignation or termination of the appointment of the Chair or Vice-Chair, they shall be replaced for the remainder of the mandate, again by a simple majority vote to elect a new Chair and/or Vice-Chair.

The COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) may, in exceptional cases, revoke the Chair and/or Vice-Chair of the Action. The CSO issues a written justification of the act to the MC. Such decision is without the possibility of appeal.

Article 8

Meetings of the MC can be held only if at least two-thirds of the COST Countries participating in the Action are represented.

Decisions of the MC shall be taken by simple majority vote of MC Members present or represented at the meeting, with one vote per COST Member Country and Cooperating State participating in the Action. In the event of a tie, the procedure may be repeated. The MC Chair does not have the right to vote.

⁴ Representatives from European RTD Organisation are eligible to be elected Chair or Vice-Chair provided the host country nominates them as country representatives. MC Observers from Near Neighbour Countries, International Partner Countries and Specific Organisations other than European RTD Organisations are not eligible to be elected Chair or Vice-Chair.



The minutes of an MC meeting at which at least two-thirds of the COST countries participating in the Action are not represented must be approved by a MC vote according to Article 3.

Article 9

The MC is convened by the Chair as often as required for the performance of its tasks and not less than once per year.

It may also be convened at the request of members representing at least three COST countries participating in the Action.

Article 10

Support for the MC must be provided by the Grant Holder following the Decentralised management (so-called COST Grant System). Support to the MC can be provided by the COST Association in a subsidiary basis for meetings organised following the Centralised management.

Article 11

The COST Association must receive copies of correspondence and minutes of meetings pertinent to the monitoring of the Action.

Official documents to be distributed by the Grant Holder (or by the COST Association in case of meeting organised under the Centralised management) at meetings must be provided at least one week before the meeting. Whenever possible, documents should be electronically distributed by the authors directly to the Action Participants and the Grant Holder as well as to the COST Association.

Article 12

Meetings shall be held where the MC considers it advisable to meet, in easy to reach locations such as universities or research organisations of any COST country participating in the Action. The first MC meeting is organised by the COST Association and takes place in Brussels.

Article 13

The working language of the MC is English. Documents emanating from the MC must be written in English.

Article 14

These Rules of Procedure must be respected and can not be amended by the MC.
